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What's New

An updated version (Version 8.0) of the Automated Reporting System (ARS) has been created for filing the 2003-2004 TRS Employer's Annual Report of Earnings. This booklet contains instructions for installing Version 8.0 on your computer. You are required to use Version 8.0 for filing the 2003-2004 annual report. You will notice the following changes in Version 8.0:

Updated Forms

- Summary and Certification of Employer's Annual Report of Earnings
- Reconciliation of Health Insurance Contributions

The printouts of the Employer's Sick Leave Report, Leave of Absence Report, and Sabbatical Leave Certification are obtained from the diskette. It is not necessary to send paper copies of these forms to us. (See the TRS Summary of Annual Report Documents on page 8.)

Note: If you are unable to complete these three forms by the time you file the diskette, you will need to forward a paper copy at a later date. If possible, we prefer you file all known leave information with the annual report diskette by August 15 and follow-up with amended copies, if necessary.

Overview

The Automated Reporting System is an easy-to-use Windows-based system developed jointly by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS). The ARS enables you, an employer, to file the following forms on diskette:

- the TRS Employer's Annual Report of Earnings,
- the TRS Employer's Sick Leave Report,
- the TRS Leave of Absence Report,
- the TRS Sabbatical Leave Certification, and
- the ISBE Teacher Service Record

Advantages of using the ARS include:

- preventing or identifying data errors because the ARS is programmed with basic reporting rules.

- importing your payroll information at year end provided you have a computerized payroll system and have created a properly formatted import file.
- identifying and resolving possible errors before you file when you use the edit report process.
- the ability to generate special reports and other required forms.
- an online Help System.

Although all TRS-covered employers having 50 or more TRS members are required to use the ARS, we strongly encourage all employers to use this system.

Software Distribution

You will receive a compact disk (CD) with your annual report packet in June. The CD contains ARS Version 8.0 and should be used to install the software. Follow the steps on page 2 to install the software from the CD.

Note: Be sure to delete your old ISBE/TRS software prior to installing Version 8.0.

Deleting Old ISBE/TRS Software

Delete ISBETRS Folder

If you already have an ISBETRS folder created for a previous year's version of the ARS, delete the ISBETRS folder before installing the new version of the software. **Be sure to keep a copy of the exported annual report diskette file that contains the previous year's annual report file.**

To delete the ISBETRS folder:

1. Access **Windows Explorer** or **My Computer**.
2. To enter **Windows Explorer**, select **Start, Programs, Windows Explorer** from your desktop. To enter **My Computer**, select the **My Computer** icon from your desktop
3. Click or double-click on **C:**, then locate and right-click on the folder named **ISBETRS**.
4. Select **Delete**, then left click your mouse.
5. Click **Yes** in the pop-up message you receive verifying the deletion of the folder. Make sure you are deleting the folder named ISBETRS.

Note: Commands may differ slightly depending on the version of Windows you are using. Users of previous ARS versions may notice “Isbetr8 6.0” or “Isbetr8 7.0” under the Start, Programs menu. To remove these, right mouse click and left click on Delete. If your right click does not produce a delete option, use Windows Explorer to locate and delete these items. ARS Version 8.0 will work regardless of whether the old commands are deleted from the Start, Programs menu.

Installing ISBE/TRS Software on Your Computer

Insert the 8.0 version CD that you received with your annual report packet in June 2004 into your computer’s CD drive. The CD contains a file named **isbetr8.exe**.

Note: You may begin the installation process by using the Run command, Windows Explorer or My Computer if you know the location of the **isbetr8.exe** file.

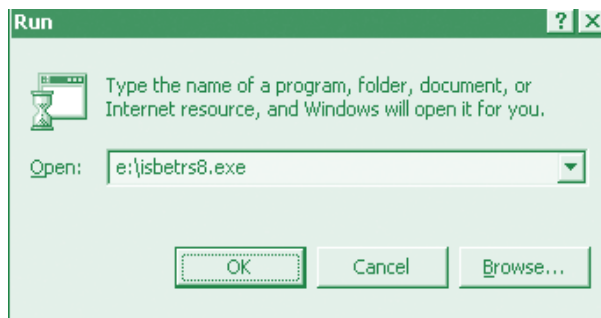
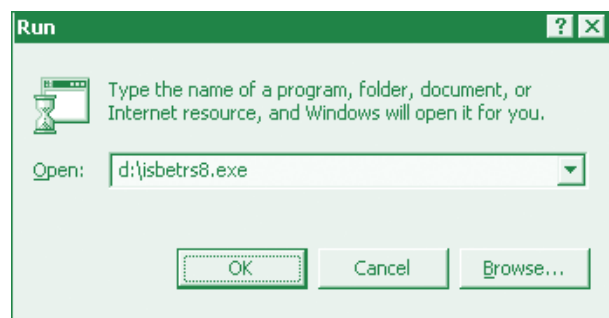
Step 1: Install the ISBETR8.EXE File

Install Using the Run Command

From your desktop, click on **Start**, then click **Run** to begin installation.

A command box will be displayed. At the “Open:” window, type the isbetr8.exe directory path location.

Type the path of your CD drive and the file name. If “D:” is your CD drive, type **d:\isbetr8.exe**; or if “E:” is your CD drive, type **e:\isbetr8.exe**. Click OK and proceed to Step 2.



Install Using Windows Explorer or My Computer
Enter Windows Explorer by clicking **Start, Programs, Windows Explorer**; or access My Computer by double-clicking the **My Computer** icon on your desktop.

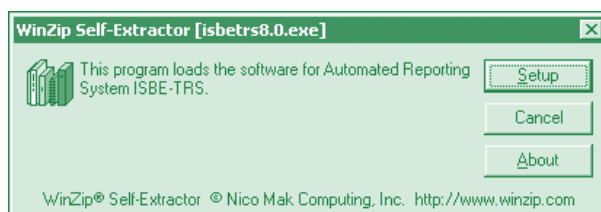
The CD drive is usually “D:” or “E:”. Access the appropriate drive for the CD.

In the window, locate and double-click the file **isbetr8.exe**. Proceed to Step 2.

Note: the “.exe” extension may not display if your system is set to hide file extensions.

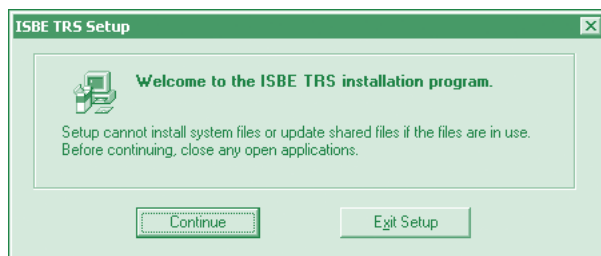
Step 2: Install WinZip Self-Extractor

When the WinZip Self-Extractor screen is displayed, click **Setup** to install the software. It is normal to see a variety of file names quickly “unzipping” on the screen.



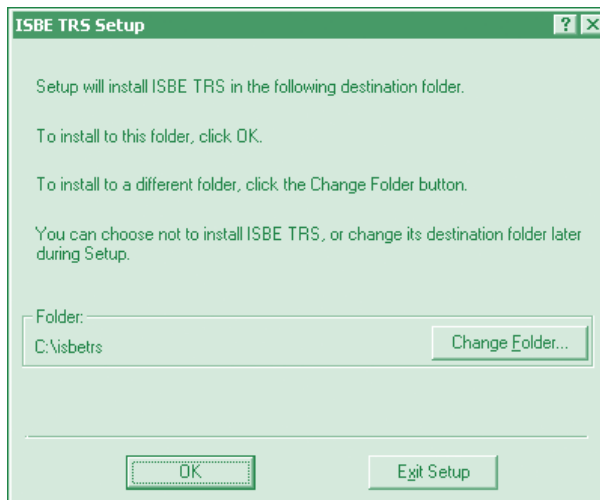
Step 3: Continue Installation

At the ISBE TRS Setup screen, click **Continue** to proceed with the installation.



Step 4: Assign a Directory and a Drive

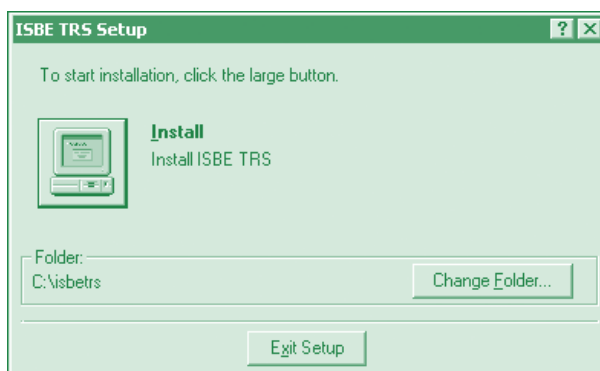
At the ISBE TRS Setup screen, click **OK** to setup and install the software in directory **C:\ISBETR8** – the default directory.



Note: TRS does not support installing to a directory other than **C:\ISBETRS**.

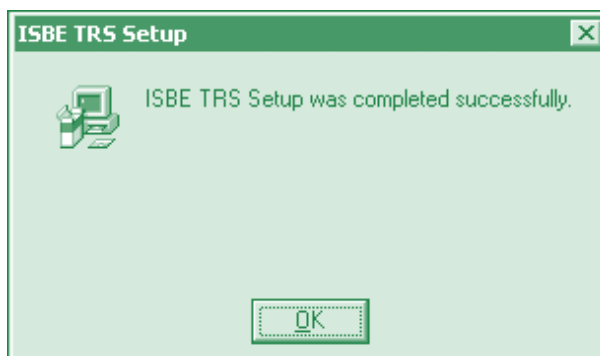
Step 5: Continue Installation Steps

At the ISBE TRS setup screen, click on the **Install icon** to continue the installation.



Step 6: Complete the Installation

At the ISBE TRS setup screen, click **OK**. The installation of your software is now complete.

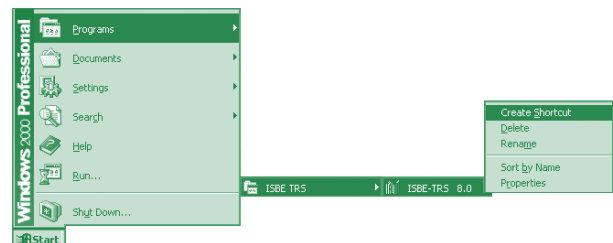


Remove the CD from the CD drive. Once the software installation is complete, the CD is not needed to operate the ARS. We recommend that you retain the CD although you should not need to use it again.

Step 7: Create a Shortcut (optional)

To create a shortcut icon on your desktop for Version 8.0, first delete from your desktop any existing icons from a previous version of the ARS. Then, complete these two steps:

1. From your desktop, select **Start, Programs, ISBE TRS**, move to the ISBE-TRS 8.0 books icon and right click. Move to **Create Shortcut** and left click.



2. A second books icon, ISBE-TRS 8.0 (2) will appear. Click and hold the left mouse button, drag the ISBE-TRS 8.0 (2) books icon to your desktop, and release the mouse button.

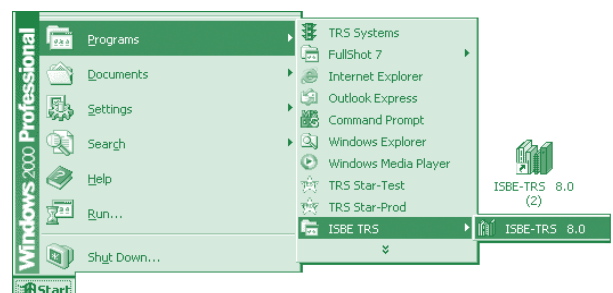


Note: If your system settings won't allow you to right click on items from your Start, Programs menu, consult your computer technician or support person if you wish to create a shortcut icon on your desktop. You are **not** required to have a shortcut icon on your desktop to use the ARS software.

Logging onto the ARS

There are two ways to log onto the ARS.

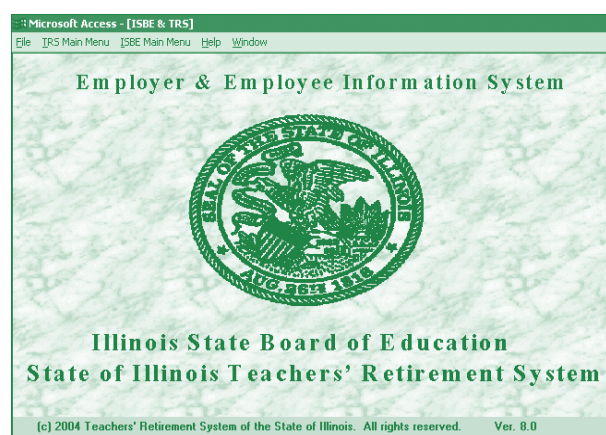
1. If you have created a shortcut icon ISBE-TRS 8.0 (2) on your desktop, double click on the shortcut books icon.
OR
2. Click on **Start, Programs, ISBE TRS**. Then double click on the ISBE-TRS 8.0 books icon.



Note: Before logging onto the ARS, exit any other unnecessary open applications, particularly any Microsoft Access-based programs. Although the ARS has been designed to operate parallel to other Microsoft Access-based programs, closing all unnecessary open applications or programs is a recommended safety precaution.

Select ISBE or TRS Main Menu

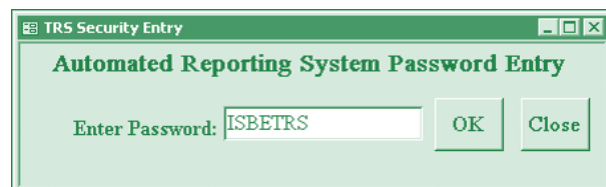
The ARS will open to the Employer & Employee Information System menu. On the upper portion of your screen, a menu bar of **File, TRS Main Menu, ISBE Main Menu, Help,** and **Window** will be displayed.



Using your cursor, click **TRS Main Menu**, then click on **Teachers' Retirement System**.

Enter a Password

A logon box will be displayed. At the Enter Password prompt, type **ISBETRS**. Then click **OK** or press enter. This field is not case sensitive.



The Teachers' Retirement System Main Menu will be displayed.

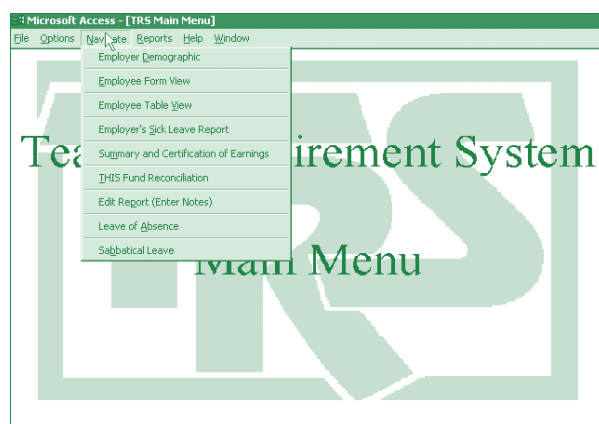


Operating the ARS

To operate the ARS, select items from the menu bar located on the top portion of your screen. Available from the **TRS Main Menu**, the **Options, Navigate,** and **Reports** menus are the three main areas from which you will work. The **File, Help,** and **Window** menus are also available from the **TRS Main Menu**. Please familiarize yourself with the functions available from the TRS Main Menu.

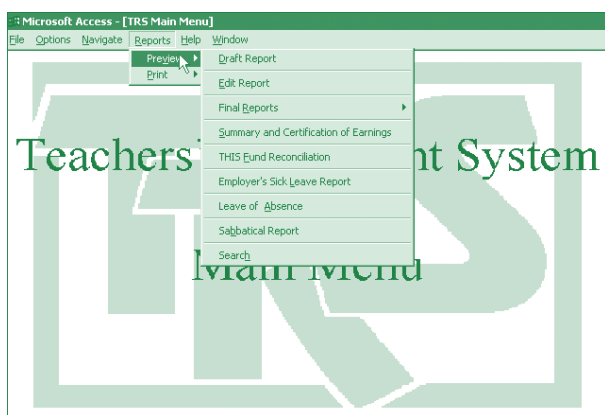
- **File** – Use to close the screen you are working on. This option also contains the page setup.
- **Options** – Use this menu's selections to obtain information from a diskette or to copy information to a diskette. Generally, the import or recover functions will retrieve data from a diskette containing the information in a file.
- **Navigate** – This menu contains selections for adding, modifying, or deleting individual records of data.

Exporting allows you to backup data for your annual report to a diskette. Export also generates the diskette that at the conclusion of the process contains your annual report data and should be sent to us.



Hint: With your cursor on a particular entry field, right click your mouse. A pop-up message from the Help System will appear. The message provides a definition of the field on which the cursor is placed.

- **Reports** – This menu allows you to preview or print the various reports.



Reminder: Once you have entered a menu option from the **Navigate** or **Reports** menu, press the F1 key to open the Help System and receive information about the form on which you are working.

- **Help** – Use to access the contents of the Help System or search a help topic.
- **Window** – Indicates the menus that you have visited.

Accessing the Help System

The ARS has a Help System that contains information relevant to the form or field of information on which you are working. Generally, there are three ways to access the Help System:

1. Pressing the F1 key from a screen will open the Help System and provide information relevant to the form on which you are working.
2. Right clicking your mouse while the cursor is placed in an entry field will open or “pop-up” a Help System message that provides an explanation of the field on which you are working.
3. The Help System is always available from the **Help** menu option on the menu bar.

Completing the Annual Report

We recommend that you periodically backup your data. You can backup your data by using the **Export all Reports to Diskette** command from the **TRS Main Menu, Options, Export** menu. For more detailed instructions on carrying out the following commands, access the ARS Help System (F1).

Follow these instructions when completing the TRS Employer’s Annual Report of Earnings.

1. Enter employer demographic information. Enter the form by clicking on **Navigate** from the **TRS Main Menu** and then **Employer Demographic**. Some reports will not run correctly if this information is not entered.
2. Determine the type of user you are and import, recover, or enter employee earnings data. (See “Should I use the Import or Recover function?” in FAQ on page 11.)
 - A. Import employee records. Importing records is a process that allows employers to create a “dump” of payroll information in a specific ASCII fixed-length format to a diskette and then import the data from the diskette into the ARS. Modifications to the imported data are generally necessary to properly report annual report data within TRS guidelines. Even so, the employee demographic captured through the import process is timesaving.
 - B. Recover previous year’s records from the exported file. After recovering the previous year’s employee records from the **TRS Main Menu**, click **Options, Year-End Processing** and **Delete Employee Earnings Information** before you begin to modify, add, or delete records. The recover process is not necessary for an import user unless the backup file needs to be recovered.
 - C. Enter employee records manually.

3. After importing, recovering, or manually entering employee records, modify data as necessary. See “Frequently Asked Questions” on page 10 if you encounter an error message in the import or recovery process.

Each time you log into the ARS, changes made in your previous session will be retained. However, it is always a good idea to backup your data. If software problems occur, you will be able to recover your backup data after reinstalling the ARS.

4. Review employee data on the **Draft Report** or **Employee Table View**. Pay special attention to those employees who have an edit code. You can view records with edits only from the **Employee Table View Options** menu. You can also print a Draft Report or Edit Report to view existing edits.*
5. Review edit codes. An edit code does not necessarily mean that the information you have entered in the record is incorrect. Many edit codes are reasonableness checks, prompting us to verify the employee data. A detailed note on the Edit Report may prevent an inquiry from us. Other edit codes are considered fatal and indicate that the data is incorrect or not in accordance with reporting guidelines. Therefore, review the employee data to ensure its accuracy based on reporting guidelines prior to entering an edit note. See page 9 for a listing of edit codes.

Please do not modify data just because an edit code exists. Modify the employee data *only* if the original information is not correct or in accordance with reporting guidelines.

The information you report on the Employer’s Annual Report of Earnings must be filed in accordance with TRS reporting guidelines (e.g., reporting earnings on an accrual basis). See the *Employer Guide*, Chapter 5: Reporting, for additional information. The ARS allows the automation of the information to be

reported and allows you to identify the situations we will inquire about through the edit report process.

6. Modify data as necessary using **Employee Form View**, **Employee Table View**, or both. These items are located under **Navigate** from the **TRS Main Menu**.
7. Enter notes for any existing edits using **Edit Report** (Enter Notes) by clicking **Navigate** from the **TRS Main Menu**.
8. Review, modify, and print the Edit Report. Repeat this procedure until you have verified the accuracy of the report and your notes.*
9. Print the Final Report and keep it for your records.*
10. On the Summary and Certification of Employer’s Annual Report of Earnings form, enter the total 9 percent contributions, the total 10 ½ contributions, and the total employer TRS retirement contributions (0.58 percent), remitted to TRS for the 2003-2004 school year. Refer to your Employer Statement when completing the Summary and Certification of Employer’s Annual Report of Earnings form. This form is located under **Navigate** from the **TRS Main Menu**.
11. Print and sign the Summary and Certification of Employer’s Annual Report of Earnings. On this form, you certify the accuracy of the Employer’s Annual Report of Earnings and other related forms. An original signature in ink is required.*

Employers who are state agencies who do not remit THIS Fund contributions should skip steps 12 and 13.

12. Enter the total THIS Fund contributions (0.75 percent plus 0.5 percent) remitted to TRS for the 2003-2004 school year on the Reconciliation of Health Insurance Contributions form. Refer to your Employer Statement when completing the Reconciliation of Health Insurance Contributions form. This form is located under **Navigate** from the **TRS Main Menu**.

* *Preview or print reports by selecting the appropriate item from Reports on the TRS Main Menu.*

13. Print the Reconciliation of Health Insurance Contributions form.*
14. Enter your terminated members' information on the Employer's Sick Leave Report form. Report the total unused, uncompensated sick leave days for all members who terminated employment during the reporting year. This form is located under **Navigate** from the **TRS Main Menu**.
15. Print the Employer's Sick Leave Report form and keep it for your records.*
16. Enter members' information on the Leave of Absence form. List any TRS member who was on any type of unpaid leave of absence for any portion of the school year for which you are reporting. See step 18 for members who are on sabbatical leaves.
17. Print the Leave of Absence forms and keep them for your records.*
18. Enter member's information on the Sabbatical Leave Certification form. List any member on a paid sabbatical leave under the Illinois School Code for any portion of the school year for which you are reporting.
19. Print the Sabbatical Leave Certification forms and keep them for your records.*
20. Run Export Annual Report to Diskette using the 3.5 inch diskette that you received in your Annual Report packet. Write your seven-digit TRS code (employer number) on the label on the diskette. To perform this function, click on **Export, All Reports to Diskette**, which is found under the **Options** menu located in the **TRS Main Menu**. (See TRS Summary of Annual Report Documents and Annual Report Checklist on page 8.)
21. Send the required documents along with the diskette containing the Export Annual Report to Diskette file to the TRS

Springfield office. The convenient pre-addressed media-mailer enclosed with your annual report packet may be used to return the diskette and other required documents to TRS. Refer to the Employer Bulletin you received with your annual report packet in June. You can also refer to the TRS Summary of Annual Report Documents and Annual Report Checklist.

The Employer's Annual Report of Earnings form is required to be submitted along with all required documents no later than August 15 each year. By law, you will be assessed a penalty of \$250 per day for each day the report is not on file past August 15.

Also refer to the TRS *Employer Guide* (Chapter 5) for reporting requirements, reporting examples, and additional annual report preparation instructions. Call or e-mail the TRS Employer Services Department for help completing the Employer's Annual Report of Earnings form. The phone number is (888) 877-0890; the e-mail address is employers@trs.state.il.us.

Keep Information Readily Available

Please keep your annual report information and notes readily available until the middle of November. After we receive your Employer's Annual Report of Earnings, an extensive review process takes place. TRS Employer Services Department auditors review all of the annual reports and complete the process by the middle of November.

From the time you file the annual report to the end of November, a TRS Employer Services Department auditor will contact you if there are questions about the reported information or problems with the diskette.

* *Preview or print reports by selecting the appropriate item from Reports on the TRS Main Menu.*

TRS Summary of Annual Report Documents

Report/Form	Produced by ARS Version 8.0	Send diskette to TRS	Send original paper copy to TRS	Keep copy for district
Annual Report data file	x	x		x
Draft Report	x			
Edit Report (TRS)	x		x	x
Final Report - all employment types	x			x
Final Report - select employment types (optional)	x			
Summary and Certification of Employer's Annual Report of Earnings (signed)*	x		x	x
Reconciliation of Health Insurance Contributions	x		x	x
Employer's Sick Leave Report	x	x		x
Leave of Absence Report (if applicable)	x	x		x
Sabbatical Leave Certification (if applicable)	x	x		x
Search Report (optional)	x			
Retirement Contribution Compliance Questionnaire			x	x

*The Summary and Certification of Employer's Annual Report of Earnings requires an original inked signature.

Annual Report Checklist

- ☐ 1. Enter employer demographic information (*Navigate*).
- ☐ 2. Enter employee earnings data. Employee records may be imported from your payroll system (*Options - Import Records*), recovered from the previous year's report (*Options - Recover Records*) or manually entered (*Navigate - Employee Form View or Employee Table View*).
- ☐ 3. Print Draft Report (*Reports*).
- ☐ 4. Review edits on Draft Report and make any corrections by adding, modifying, or deleting employee records (*Navigate - Employee Table View or Employee Form View*).
- ☐ 5. Enter notes for Edit Report (*Navigate*) then print (*Reports*).
- ☐ 6. Print Final Report - all employment types (*Reports*).
- ☐ 7. Enter data for Summary and Certification of Earnings (*Navigate*), then print (*Reports*). Must be signed.
- ☐ 8. Enter data for THIS Fund Reconciliation (*Navigate*), then print (*Reports*).
- ☐ 9. Enter data for Employer's Sick Leave Report (*Navigate*), then print for your records (*Reports*).
- ☐ 10. Enter data for Leave of Absence Report (*Navigate*), then print for your records (*Reports*).
- ☐ 11. Enter data for Sabbatical Leave Report (*Navigate*), then print for your records (*Reports*).
- ☐ 12. Copy data files to diskette (*Options - Export - All Reports to Diskette*).
- ☐ 13. Complete Retirement Contribution Compliance Questionnaire.
- ☐ 14. Photocopy or print reports for district records.
- ☐ 15. Mail diskette and reports to TRS by August 15.

TRS Edit Code Listing

As part of the edit report process, the purpose of the edit codes is to identify member records which should be reviewed by the user to verify accuracy. After reviewing the records with invoked edit codes, some records will require modifications to the entered information while other records will require explanations on the edit report.

Users should always refer to the TRS *Employer Guide* for detailed information, TRS reporting requirements and reporting examples.

3608 - Gender is invalid.

4214 - The employment type entered is not an F, P, H, S or E.

4215 - Creditable earnings are greater than annual salary rate.

4216 - Federally funded salary is greater than creditable earnings by more than \$1.

4217 - The employment agreement is greater than 265 days.

4218 - The employment agreement is less than 170 days.

4219 - Total number of days paid is greater than the number of days in the employment agreement.

4220 - The number of days paid is less than the employment agreement and annual salary rate is equal to creditable earnings for a full-time teacher.

4221 - The number of days paid is greater than 265.

4227 - Total number of days paid is greater than zero for employment type (E), extra-duty not requiring certification.

4229 - Retirement contributions are not within \$0.99 of 9 percent of creditable earnings.

4231 - Annual salary rate exceeds \$149,999.99. Please provide a copy of the member's contract and/or any additional documentation verifying reported earnings.

4232 - The daily rate (computed by dividing the annual salary rate by the number of days in the employment agreement) multiplied by days paid is not within \$200 of reported creditable earnings for a full-time teacher greater than 49 years of age.

4233 - The annual salary rate for a full-time teacher is less than \$11,000.

4234 - The number of days paid is equal to the employment agreement and the annual salary is greater than the creditable earnings by more than \$175 for a full-time or part-time contractual teacher.

4235 - Annual salary rate exceeds creditable earnings by more than \$0.99 for a teacher reported as an extra-duty not requiring certification, part-time noncontractual or substitute employment type.

4238 - The annual salary rate of the part-time contractual teacher is less than \$4,000.

4276 - The annual salary rate is greater than \$15,000 for a teacher reported as employment type (E), extra-duty not requiring certification.

4277 - Total number of days paid for a full-time, part time contractual, substitute, or part-time noncontractual teacher is equal to zero.

4279 - The annual salary rate for a part-time contractual teacher exceeds \$45,000.

4284 - Creditable earnings divided by days paid for a part-time noncontractual or substitute teacher is outside the range of \$15 to \$175.

4288 - The daily rate (computed by dividing the annual salary rate by the number of days in the employment agreement) multiplied by the days paid is not within \$500 of reported creditable earnings for a full-time teacher less than 50 years of age.

4391 - Creditable earnings divided by days paid for a part-time contractual teacher is outside the range of \$25 to \$250.

5196 - Total number of days paid is greater than 179 days for a substitute or part-time noncontractual teacher.

5197 - Annual salary rate exceeds creditable earnings by more than \$0.99 for a part-time contractual teacher.

5199 - Days paid outside of range for part-time contractual teachers.

5201 - Creditable earnings is less than or equal to zero.

5300 - Repetitive Social Security number.

Note: For more detailed edit descriptions and examples of edit notes, refer to TRS Edits in the Automated Reporting System's Help Menu. Click on the edit number for more information.



Frequently Asked Questions

In the Employer Demographic screen, what is my ISBE Type Code; do I have to list it?

The ISBE Type Code is a two-digit number that is part of your Teacher Service Record (TSR) that is filed with the Illinois State Board of Education. The code is needed for the program to work properly. If you cannot locate the number from your prior year's TSR, contact ISBE or TRS for help in identifying your ISBE Type Code.

Where can I find my TRS Employer Number?

Your TRS Employer Number or TRS Code is a seven-digit identification number used in filing reports, sending remittances, and other correspondence. You should be able to locate your Employer Number from your prior year's annual report or call TRS for assistance.

What does the error message "Couldn't find object import2.txt" mean?

You may be trying to import a recover file. Verify whether you are attempting to Import or Recover and verify the name of the file on the diskette.

Can I install through my network?

No. Version 8.0 is designed to be installed directly onto the hard drive of your computer.

Why am I unable to enter information for the Summary and Certification of Employer's Annual Report of Earnings?

If you enter through the Reports Menu from the TRS Main Menu, you can only preview or print the document. You must enter the form through the Navigate menu to enter, delete, or modify information.

Why do I get an error when I try to recover last year's annual report?

Verify that you are entering the correct file name in the recovery process. You must enter the full path from which you are recovering annual report information including the drive and file name. For example, if your TRS employer number is 016-0030, you would generally type A:\0160030.ann to recover.

In an attempt to Import, I receive an error message "Numerical Field Overflow." What does this mean?

The process of importing records requires a specific fixed length ASCII format. If the file you are attempting to import is not the exact correct format, this error message will occur. This error message could also occur if the data contained in the file is incorrect. The most common example is a date in the birth date field that is not an actual calendar date. If the import file lists 00000000 or 00001900, the process will fail. If the data in a numeric field like rate or earnings contains symbols, such as ####, the process will fail.

Generally, using a notepad or word pad, opening and analyzing the Import2 file is the best way to locate and repair the error.*

I've already installed the new version of the software, but receive an "Out of Memory" error message when I try to logon, what is wrong?

If you received this error message, you may not be able to use ARS Version 8.0 on your computer. Some newer computer systems conflict with ARS Version 8.0. Contact TRS at (888) 877-0890. Version 8.5 has been developed to solve the "Out of Memory" problem. You will be provided instruction on how to obtain the software at the time.

The Summary and Certification of Earnings and Reconciliation of Health Insurance Contributions forms do not show the correct contribution rates. How do I update these forms?

If you are not seeing the correct contribution rates for the year for which you are reporting, you are using the old software. Make sure you have deleted your old software version(s) and installed the newest version of the Automated Reporting System. Installation from the CD will automatically setup and install the software in a folder named ISBETRS on your computer's hard drive (C). The software is programmed to look for its working files in this folder. If you have installed the new version to another location or saved an older version in another

** If you would like assistance, you may attach the Import2 file and send an e-mail to jproffitt@trs.state.il.us.*

location on your computer, conflicts may develop between the two versions of the software.

On my Start, Programs menu or on my desktop, icons from the old version of the software are still displayed. How do I get rid of them?

These icons must be deleted independently. You can attempt to delete these items by selecting the appropriate icon, right clicking your mouse, and left clicking on delete. Click **Yes** or **OK**, at the prompt. If your computer will not allow you to right mouse click on these items, you must locate these icons through Windows Explorer or My Computer and delete them from there.

I've had computer problems, can I have an extension to the August 15 reporting deadline?

No. The Illinois Pension Code does not provide for an extension of the annual reporting deadline. On-time reporting is essential to ensure that all members receive their annual statements in a timely manner. If your annual report is late, a penalty will be applied. Employers do have an opportunity to request a waiver of any penalty that is applied, but an extension cannot be granted.

When I try to print from ARS, I receive an error message. Why won't it print?

Make sure your printer is turned on, is online, and is able to print from other programs to determine whether the problem is widespread or isolated to printing from ARS.

Previous ARS Versions have conflicted with certain printers. This will continue to be a problem with Version 8.0. Generally, an error message such as "Can't Find LPT1" will generate when this error occurs. ARS commonly conflicted with the printer driver for HP1100C. A simple workaround is to add a printer, such as HP1200C, through your computer's printer settings screens and set this printer as your default. Your documents will still print to HP1100C, but your computer will use the printer driver for HP1200C, which is compatible with ARS. Once you've printed your ARS documents, you should reset your computer's default printer settings.

Can I use the software on a MAC?

TRS does not support the use of ARS software on a MAC. The software may work in some instances if the MAC is running in a Windows simulated environment, but most likely it won't.

I have all my information for the annual report in an Excel spreadsheet. Is it possible to transfer the information into ARS?

It is not possible to copy the information from an excel spreadsheet into the ARS. However, it is possible to convert the Excel spreadsheet into a specified fixed-length ASCII format file named "Import2" and use the Import function to import the data into ARS. The columns from the Excel must be in the exact width and order specified in the format. The columns must be zero-filled. The file should be saved as a "Formatted Text (space delimited) *.prn" and then renamed to Import2 with no file extension. The fixed length format can be found in the ARS Help System.

Should I use the Import or Recover function?

This can be a confusing issue because both functions are actually "importing" data into the ARS. To distinguish the difference in the two functions, we have called the process of importing data from a previous year's diskette generated from a previous year's version of the ARS as a "recover" function.

However, the Import function is designed to import data from a current-year file called Import2 that you can create from most payroll software vendor programs or design from an Excel spreadsheet.

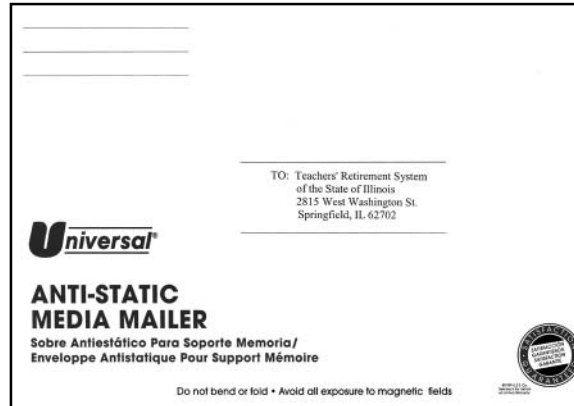
An employer should use either the Import or Recover function, but not both. If an employer is using the Import feature, it is unnecessary to use the recover function and vice-versa.

Regardless of which function is used, the data that is imported into the ARS should be reviewed for accuracy and modifications should be made to ensure that the data exported to a diskette and submitted to TRS is accurate. Once you determine whether you are utilizing the Import or Recover function, it is important to select the proper function from the TRS Main Menu, Options. The file formats are different and it is vital that you select the proper function or the process will fail.

Diskette Shipping Instructions

Once you have completed the Employer's Annual Report of Earnings using the ARS, send the diskette and related forms to the TRS Springfield office. When shipping the diskette to TRS, please follow these instructions:

1. Be sure to write your TRS code, school district name, and the current reporting year on the label applied to the diskette with the exported annual report data.
2. Place the diskette and the other required documents in the pre-addressed anti-static



media mailer enclosed in your annual report packet.

3. **You must file the diskette and related forms with the TRS Springfield office by August 15.** The Illinois Pension Code provides for a penalty of \$250 per day for each day past the August 15 deadline that the Employer's Annual Report of Earnings form is not on file with TRS. All required documents, including the diskette, may be mailed in the same envelope to the Springfield office address.

Questions

If you have questions, please call us at (888) 877-0890. Select option 1 for reporting issues and basic ARS questions such as researching edit codes. Select extension 2474 or 2463 for technical issues such as import errors or software problems. You may also e-mail your questions to employers@trs.state.il.us.